



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Bishop Rawle CE (VA) Primary School

Royal Walk
Cheadle
ST10 1QA

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Satisfactory

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Staffordshire

Dates of inspection: 21 April 2016

Date of last inspection: 27 May 2011

School's unique reference number: 124332

Acting Headteacher: Kate Clowes

Inspector's name and number: Huw Bishop 344

School context

The school is smaller than the average one form entry primary school serving a rural market town in Staffordshire and there are 163 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small proportion of students having English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported through pupil premium funding is above the national average. The school has strong links with St Giles the Abbot parish church and the local Methodist church. There have been a significant number of changes in leadership, governance and staffing since the previous inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bishop Rawle Primary School as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The leadership of the acting headteacher and her vision for the development of the school's distinctive Christian character.
- The quality of relationships within the family of the school and the improved behaviour and attitudes of pupils which are firmly based on their understanding of Christian values.
- Collective worship which enhances pupils' spiritual development and their appreciation of Anglican tradition and practice.

Areas to improve

- Include representation from the close partnership that exists between the school and the parish church on current and future governance arrangements, to enrich strategic planning and ensure that the school's Christian distinctiveness is firmly embedded within the academic improvement journey.
- Involve all members of the school community in the formal evaluation of Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness.
- Give pupils the opportunity to be involved in the planning of whole school worship so that their personal spiritual development is increased.
- Address the leadership of religious education (RE) and ensure that assessment information on pupils' progress in RE follows whole school policy and practice and informs lesson planning.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is satisfactory at meeting the needs of all learners

Christian values such as love, tolerance and respect for others influence all aspects of school life and parents affirm that this helps to influence pupils' attitudes to learning at home as well as in school. Pupils talk confidently about the way these values affect their daily lives and improving their chances to achieve and they recognise that their learning has improved greatly under the current leadership arrangements. Good relationships and interaction between teachers and pupils contribute to a high level of enjoyment of learning by pupils and this leads naturally to better progress. The management of behaviour in school is also carefully linked to Christian values and teachers and other adults model them in their daily work. The school celebrates the way in which children demonstrate Christian values in their daily lives in school and particularly the way they behave in lessons and move around school and the playground. They are awarded 'dojos' to recognise this. This motivates pupils to want to do well. RE makes a valuable contribution to the school's Christian character and schemes of work enable pupils to explore Christianity and other world faiths and their practices effectively. Pupils are aware that Christianity is a world faith through a range of topics and activities. They know and can discuss biblical stories with some confidence. Reflection areas in the corridors and classrooms are used effectively for spiritual development and displays and artefacts challenge them to think deeply about issues. All members of the school community know that they are valued and an ethos of trust and mutual respect is very evident. Since being placed in special measures by Ofsted in 2015 the school has dealt with a number of issues relating to the needs of pupils and strategies to improve the effectiveness of its provision are beginning to succeed. This is helped by stability in leadership and staffing as well as the promotion of positive attitudes towards learning and behaviour. Pupil outcomes are improving slowly and the school's own records show a stronger profile of the progress pupils are now making.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development through the experiences it gives them to reflect on Christian values and the implications for their life in school and at home. There is a carefully planned programme of worship that gives pupils a structure that enables them to encounter Christian belief and practice. Worship is related to important events in the school's daily life as well as the seasons of the church's year. Worship is led by a range of people including the acting headteacher, the rector of the parish church and a local Methodist minister and pupils' experience is, therefore, varied. Pupils have a good understanding of the nature of worship, the wider Christian faith and Anglican traditions and practice. Pupils also understand the teaching of the Trinity. A Year 2 pupil described the work of the Holy Spirit so delightfully and simply by saying that "God's Spirit lives in my house under my bed and when I think about naughty things, God says, 'think about nice things', and God creeps in on me and my family". Pupils know about liturgical colours and their seasonal significance in worship. Pupils experience the Eucharist weekly in school and they are joined by parents and parishioners from St Giles's parish church, some of whom use this service as their weekly worship time. This is regarded as particularly uplifting by pupils and parents. Pupils also enjoy attending services in the parish church at key times during the school year. Collective worship has moved on since the last inspection and there is an increased participation by children in class worship. However, a greater involvement in the planning and delivery of whole school worship would enrich their spiritual development further. Pupils write their own prayers and these are used during worship. This has a positive impact on their spiritual development as pupils talk confidently about prayer and its importance in their lives. They also sing songs which are lively, engaging and sometimes require an interactive response. The school is careful to ensure that any boisterous response during the singing does not demean the dignity of the occasion and this is very carefully linked to the school's strategy to improve behaviour.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

Evidence presented during the inspection from work in pupils' books, portfolios, pupils' oral responses and discussions in lesson shows that pupils are making progress in line with their abilities. The acting headteacher currently acts as subject leader and monitors RE through observations of progress being made in lessons, checking pupils' books and general standards. This monitoring work ensures that pupils are experiencing creative and challenging activities that stimulate their imaginations, encourages them to express opinions and evaluate those with their classmates. However, because of the school's current improvement position and the headteacher's pivotal role in securing whole school improvement, governors should ensure that this key responsibility is undertaken by a separate specialist teacher to ensure that standards in RE are the best they can be. Whilst Christianity is the major religion studied in the scheme of work, pupils understand and make links between the beliefs and practices of other religions such as Judaism and Islam. This helps to prepare pupils for life in a diverse society. Good planning, questioning and a range of activities were observed during the inspection and this helped pupils to make good progress. Through focused discussion and reflection, pupils in Year 3 showed their understanding of prayer and where they could go for help if they needed it. An imaginative demonstration of turning water into wine to illustrate this, using the gospel account of the miracle in Cana, highlighted the investigation skills of some pupils, whilst all responded with awe! In Year 4, a discussion on miracles from the gospels was linked very carefully and effectively to a modern true story which gave topical relevance to the biblical text. This stimulated high levels of debate and enjoyment showing the effective use of practical expressive activities. Training offered by the diocese has played an important role in the development of RE, but the system for assessing pupils' progress in RE should be formalised so that determining next steps in learning can be achieved effectively.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is satisfactory

The school has been through an unsettling period in the last year and the main thrust of developments have been concentrated on formal improvement requirements as identified in the Ofsted inspection. The promotion of the school's Christian distinctiveness, although not ignored, has not been given the same priority during this time. However, it is clear that the acting headteacher has a clear Christian vision for the school and this is shared with other leaders. Parents and pupils say the acting headteacher provides structure, gives a clear direction and promotes a positive team spirit in the school. Pupils say the school is a 'nice place to be', they are valued, feel safe in school and know what to do should they have any worries or anxieties. They recognise, as do their parents, that there is a strong family atmosphere of Christian care and support in school. Parents feel welcome in school and say that staff are supportive and approachable. Improvements in behaviour and attitudes to learning are rooted in Christian values and pupils both know and understand this. The school's motto "Going for gold with God" emphasises aspirational thinking within a Christian context and reflects the school's Christian mission. The rector of St Giles affirmed the school's position in partnership with the parish church that the school is building on strong foundations. The school meets statutory requirements for RE and collective worship and issues raised in the previous inspection have been addressed. Representatives from the Interim Executive Board (IEB) who now act as governors for the school are also strongly committed to the continued nurture of the school's Christian distinctiveness and the security of its Anglican foundation in the school's future direction as an academy. School leaders recognise that a key area for development is the need to continue diocesan support to enable a proactive contribution to the school's self-evaluation and strategic planning as a Church of England school. There are a clear set of priorities in the school's planning with a focus on continuing to raise the academic achievement and learning experience for all pupils within this Christian context. Leaders and governors are aware that time and support is needed to embed improvements which are now beginning to bear fruit.